

Some key dates in the timeline of European integration

Words in bold are used in a vocabulary exercise after the text. A crossword on EU integration is also available here: <https://crosswordlabs.com/view/european-integration-and-union>

1950: The Schuman Declaration proposes the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to **pool** the production of coal and steel – essential materials for war – in order to prevent future wars. The ECSC is created in 1951 by “the Six”: France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg). The Schuman Declaration sets out a key approach to European integration, noting that “Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete **achievements** which first create a de facto solidarity.”

1957: The Six sign the Treaty of Rome to set up the European Economic Community (EEC) or “common market”, in order to expand cooperation. Euratom (the European Atomic Energy Community) is established too.

1962: Creation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to support European agriculture and **food security**. The CAP uses price support mechanisms and protects European markets for certain foodstuffs like cereals, meat, **dairy products**, fruit and vegetables. Over time, the European market for food has been partly opened up to imports.

1968: The EEC establishes its Customs Union. This means that cross-border trade between members is free of tariffs, while the EEC shares a Common External Tariff (CET), providing the basis for a common foreign trade policy.

1973: With the first enlargement, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark join the EEC.

1974-5: The EEC begins supporting development of poorer regions with the creation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF, 1975).

1979: First direct elections to the European Parliament.

1979: The creation of the European Monetary System (EMS) to reduce exchange rate fluctuations between EEC members. The EMS was the first step in the long road to monetary union, and created the Ecu (the European currency unit), as the EEC’s unit of account, which later became the euro.

1981: Greece joins the EEC.

1986: Spain and Portugal join the EEC.

1986: The Single European Act is signed in February and launches the process of creating the Single Market, to achieve real freedom of movement for people, capital, goods and services. Based originally on around 300 Directives, the SEA launched a multi-year plan to remove all remaining barriers to trade, notably **non-tariff barriers** (such as national protectionist measures of professions, public procurement, etc.). Crucially, it adopts the principle of “mutual recognition” of goods and services: products accepted as safe and recognised in one country must be mutually recognized by all EEC members. Qualified majority voting (QMV) is also adopted in decision making by the Council of the European Union (more commonly known as the Council of Ministers). In addition, the SEA sets out the goal of establishing a common currency.

1987: Erasmus (EuRopean Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) Programme created.

1989: In April, the so-called Delors Report is published on economic and monetary union (EMU) in the European Community. Unrelatedly, Hungary starts opening up its border to Austria in April and May. During the summer, many people begin leaving “East Germany” (the German Democratic Republic, GDR) via Hungary. On 9 November the GDR government opens the Berlin Wall. By December, most regimes in Eastern Europe had changed, including Romania.

1992: The Maastricht Treaty is signed in February, preparing the way to economic and monetary union (EMU), with the euro as the single currency, and the European Central Bank responsible monetary policy. The Treaty also establishes the European Union (EU) and European citizenship.

1993: Much of the Single Market is in place.

1994: The European Economic Area is created, liberalizing trade relationships with EFTA countries.

1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden join the EU.

1995: The Schengen area of passport-free travel is created, first with 7 countries (and 26 by 2021).

1999: On 1 January, EMU is launched and exchange rates between national currencies are fixed.

2002: On 1 January, euro banknotes and coins are introduced and national monies are **withdrawn**.

2004: 1 May – the major enlargement to Eastern Europe, as Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia join the EU.

2005: In June, France and the Netherlands reject the European Constitution.

2007: Bulgaria and Romania join the EU.

2007: The Lisbon Treaty adopts many of the changes proposed in the European Constitution.

2009-2012: The global financial crisis (GFC) spills over into the Europe's sovereign debt crisis as many southern European countries face major financial difficulties, most notably Greece. In July 2012, Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank, gives his famous "whatever it takes" speech which is a major step to prevent the collapse of the Eurozone.

2013: July, Croatia joins the EU.

2015: The Paris Agreement to limit climate change to 1.5°C completes the COP21 conference successfully.

2016: June, Britain votes for Brexit in a referendum, by a narrow majority (52%, with a 74% turnout).

2020: After years of negotiation, Britain the EU on 31 January, and leaves the Single Market on 31 December, having reached a minimalist trade deal with the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

2020: Next Generation Europe (NGEU) is adopted as a common recovery plan through to 2026, whereby the Commission will borrow €750 billion in capital markets: €360 billion will be disbursed in loans and €390 billion in **grants**. NGEU will operate alongside the EU's usual Multiannual Financial Framework, which has a budget of €1074.30 for 2021-2027.

2020-21: After the Covid-19 pandemic led to an initial closing of borders in spring 2020 and nationally-oriented responses to the disease, the EU organises a joint vaccination campaign in 2021. While it starts slowly, the campaign is a clear attempt to consolidate solidarity.

Match the words and definitions:

To pool	Foodstuffs made from various types of milk.
Achievement(s)	Regulations, government buying policies, national technical standards, etc. that are used to prevent trade.
Food security	To leave, to move back from.
Dairy product(s)	To share, to put together.
Non-tariff barriers (NTBs)	Money given as a donation.
Withdraw	The importance of providing enough food to a population
Grant(s)	Something that is accomplished, usually involving much effort.